1: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

dwelling-enclosures of the Lodge members clustered close around. As the cemeteries where old men are buried increased in size, and as, moreover, the number of burials of young men, women and children inside their dwelling-houses grew also, the original sites tended to be abandoned and new Lodges and cemeteries (such as that of the existing *La-mbet-ra* shown on the plan), as well as new dwelling-houses, began to be built rather further afield. This tendency has not, however, reached the point achieved in the Atchin double-village of Ruruar, which, as will be shown in a later volume, has now become so decentralised that the dwelling-enclosures form a kind of irregular ring round the site of the original village, which is now occupied exclusively by the cemeteries with their accompanying Lodges.

Women's Lodges

While the above account refers almost exclusively to the overt patrilineal organisation of the island, it is of interest to note the existence at the same time of Women's Lodges recorded by Godefroy on Vao, but not existing, so far as I know, elsewhere in the Small Islands.

Referring to a "large carefully guarded enclosure at the base of a slope" in which there are "five or six houses, well kept and with the ground around them carefully cleaned and even swept," Godefroy says:[1] "This collection of houses so carefully fenced . . . is strictly reserved for women. It is there that the matrons of Pete-hul and of Togh-vanu receive women of these same clans when they are about to give birth. The midwife of these two clans is assisted by their close relatives,[2] and together they give, or rather lavish care upon them over a period of three weeks. At the end of this time the mother or the grandmother of the woman who has given birth to the child comes, with other relatives, to take away the mother and her baby and bring them back to her own home." Thus "women also have places which are taboo to men. It is a fact that no men are allowed within this enclosure, and, I may add, only such women as have themselves been born there have the right of entry. A mother who has given birth there, but was not herself born there, is rigorously excluded excepting during the period of her confinement. It is for this reason that the place is called 'the birth enclosure,'[3] *hu ni-ar na woruan*. . . . It is quite simply a native lying-in ward."[4]

Special interest attaches to the name by which this enclosure is called. The term *hu ni-ar* is in fact composed of two words, *hu* which I have recorded in Vao as *hu-hu*, meaning "to suckle" or "to be suckled,"[5] and *ni-ar* meaning "a fence." *Woruan* is clearly another spelling for the word

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, p. 230.
[2] Presumably of the women in labour.
[3] "*Enclos de la naissance.*"
[4] "*Maternité.*"
[5] See p. 178. Compare Mota *hu-hu*, "to give suck."

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

woroan discussed in later chapters. This is the nominal form of the verb *wor*, widely used in this part of Melanesia as meaning "to come forth," and in a special sense "to come forth from a woman," and so "to be born." In a more technical sense still, the word *wor* is used in Ambrim as a noun meaning "marriage section," in the sense explained on p. 97, and on Vao the word *woroan* is used in a number of ways, one of which appears to be "matrilineal descent group." [1] It is probably in this sense that the word is used here, for it will be noted that it is the "matrons" of Pete-hul and Togh-vanu who own these special Lodges. In other words, this rather obscure statement appears to indicate that ownership is not in the hands of women born in the village, who all marry elsewhere, but, on the contrary, in those of married women who do *not* belong by birth to the double-village in question. It would appear, both from this and from the fact that "only such women who have been born there [i.e. in this enclosure] have the right of entry," that these Lodges are not patrilineal but matrilineal institutions and represent a survival, despite the existing patrilocal organisation, of the former system of overt matrilineal descent of which traces are still to be found in the terminology of kinship.[2] This supposition is supported by Speiser's report that special houses in which women give birth are found also in the matrilineal islands of Oba and Maewo and in North Raga, but not in the patrilineal districts of South Raga or in Ambrim and Malekula.[3] Such Women's Lodges no longer exist in Atchin, where the matrilineal element in the kinship system is much weaker than it is on Vao.

Gardens

As has already been pointed out,[4] each village possesses its own tracts of land on the mainland of Malekula, where the main gardens are, and to which the natives travel daily in their canoes except during hurricanes and at times of special ritual activity. Each village has its own beach, or section of beach, on Vao, and its corresponding landing-place on the mainland. In addition to the mainland gardens, each village also possesses its share of uninhabited land on Vao. This land, however, like that on all the Small Islands, is largely given over to pigs, which roam around the villages, so that but little cultivation takes place there, and those plots that are used for gardening must be heavily fenced. Exigencies of time did not permit me to make a detailed study of land tenure on Vao, as I did on Atchin, and for all matters dealing with this and with agriculture, the seasons and the calendar, the reader is referred to my forthcoming volumes on that island. There the only gardens made on the Small Island itself are of a ritual nature. All essential cultivation takes place on the Malekulan mainland.

[1] See pp. 133, 138. [2] See p. 126. [3] Speiser, 3, p. 282. [4] See p. 25.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

partakes of a farewell pudding cooked by her mother.[1] Then, with her face painted red and herself now carrying a basket of yams, she is escorted to the house of the bridegroom. The pigs are handed over one by one without ceremony, beginning with the smallest, and distributed among the bride's relatives. If the last and biggest has attained the size of re-entrant-tusker, a conch-shell trumpet is blown. The bride is now left with her husband. Formerly he would have already built a house for her, but with the incipient disintegration of native culture he is now, as a rule, too lazy, and the couple live together either in his own house or in that of his father while he slowly constructs a new one.

Godefroy's Account

Godefroy's account[2] is longer and more graphic, and, while omitting some of my facts, contains others omitted in my record.

Words used for "marry."

To express the act of marrying they use a word, the root of which is common in almost all dialects, namely *lage*, together with the corresponding substantives *lagean*.[3] This is the true word meaning "to marry" or "marriage." In Vao there is a second word, which does not appear to go to the bottom of the matter as does the first, but which indicates rather the symbolic gesture, namely *tuka*, "lead into the house" (a native takes a woman into his house only in the case of marriage). When one hears the words "*Mal-kali mo tuka vavine*," literally "Mal-kali has led a woman," everyone knows that this means "Mal-kali has just been married, he has taken a woman."

Betrothal.

This is how the natives perform the marriage contract. Let us take a typical case. Melte-sale is a young man 18 or 20 years old; his parents have decided that the time has come for him to marry. They themselves choose the spouse, a girl who has been nubile for a year or two. They make their decision known to the young man. If he makes no objection, this is a sign that the choice pleases, and that he agrees.[4]

[1] Speiser (3, p. 295) states that if the bride is still very young she is provided with false breasts made of painted coconut shells. False breasts made in this way are worn by young men taking the part of women in the *na-leng* mumming plays described on p. 338 of this volume, but I never heard of them being worn by young brides. Speiser states also that the bride's mother on this occasion places a yam on the girl's lap as a fertility symbol.

[2] Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 117-21. Paragraph headings and footnotes are mine.

[3] My spelling of these words is *lagh* and *laghean* (see p. 133). Cf. Mota *lag*, "to marry"; *lagia*, "marriage."

[4] Elsewhere, however, and contrary to my information, Godefroy says, "It is the mother's brother who makes it his business to find his sister's son a wife, whom he himself chooses."

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

(v) Secondarily, and by analogy, as luminary, associated with the sun and to a lesser degree with the stars, and, by yet further analogy, with the clouds and winds.

(vi) Through his association with the sun makes trees and plants to grow; but has no control over the weather.

(vii) Is definitely not a ghost (*ta-mat*), though like one in respect of the fact that he has no body.

(viii) Is the object of no cult or supplication, but is accepted as in all ways good.

(*B*) LE-HEV-HEV, THE GUARDIAN GHOST

"*That which draws us to It so that It may devour us.*"

Having failed to discover any marked emotional attitude on the part of the natives towards Ta-ghar, Godefroy asked:

"Who then is it that you do think of?"

And was met with the reply:

"Of that other, of that which wishes to devour us as soon as we are dead."

"And what do you call him?"

"Le-hev-hev."

"Who is Le-hev-hev?"

"Le-hev-hev means: That which draws us to It so that It may devour us." [1]

Le-hev-hev, the sexless Guardian Ghost.

Le-hev-hev is the sexless Guardian Ghost, who bars the way into the land of the dead. As I have stated elsewhere,[2] it is not known on Vao whether this Being is a man or a woman, or indeed something that is neither one nor the other. All that is known about its nature is that it is "irresponsible and in all things defiant." [3] The Vao language does not differentiate between genders, so there is no help from that quarter.

The first syllable of the name, *Le-*, is the present-day feminine prefix with which every woman's name in all the Small Islands begins. In Atchin the name for the corresponding figure is Le-saw-saw, where it is definitely regarded as a woman, maternal grandmother of the ten petromorphic brothers to whom Ta-har is said to have appeared in a canoe and to whom he introduced food-stuffs and pigs.[4] Owing to the law of sound-change by which Atchin *s* becomes *h* in Vao and *w* is softened to *v*, Le-saw-saw and Le-hev-hev are philologically the same word. The

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, pp. 228-9.
[2] Layard, 4, p. 119.
[3] See p. 606 for tale of a man who for this reason called himself Le-hev-hev because he had killed his sister's son.
[4] See future volume on Atchin.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

essential name, shorn of the prefix *Le-*, is thus seen to be *Saw*, seen also in *Te-mas Saw-sap*,[1] the name of the Guardian Ghost recorded by Deacon in Seniang, where, though it is regarded as a woman, the prefix *Le-* is absent. Among the Big Nambas we find an intermediate form *Li-sev-sep*,[2] where the vowel and final consonant are the same as in Vao, but the *s* has not been softened into *h*. All these names are equivalent to that of the *Suqe*, *Sukwe* or *Supwe*,[3] the corresponding male figure in the mythology of the Northern New Hebrides and Banks Islands, of whom it is said in Maewo that "Tagaro came down from heaven, made men and other things, and went back again to heaven. Suqe belonged to the earth; his head was forked, therefore he had two thoughts in it. Whatever Tagaro did or made was right, Suqe was always wrong. . . . Tagaro sent him to a place where is a bottomless chasm, somewhere inland in Araga [Raga], where he rules over the ghosts of the dead."[4]

As will be seen from the sketch-map on p. 206, this Being, further variants of whose name are *Supe*, *Sugbue*, *Supua*, *Le-sio-siv*,[5] etc., has a distribution considerably greater than the area covered by the creator-deities of the Ta-garo–Kwat–Ambat complex, and belongs almost certainly to an older layer of culture.[6]

The Guardian Ghost regarded as male in matrilineal areas but as female in patrilineal areas.

The question of the sex of this Being is of the greatest interest. In the Northern New Hebrides, where the kinship system is matrilineal, the Guardian Ghost *Supwe* is said to be male; in all parts of Malekula and the Small Islands, however, where kinship is overtly patrilineal, this same Being (known by the variants of the same name already cited) is, except in Vao, regarded as female. To this the writer can see no possible explanation other than a psychological one, namely, that in those areas in which conscious attention is directed chiefly towards the female line of descent, the unconscious which gives rise to the myth compensates for this undue emphasis on the female side by envisaging the Guardian Ghost as male; while in those areas in which conscious attention is concentrated

[1] See p. 651.

[2] Deacon, 4, p. 585. *Li-sev-sep* is also the name of the highest rank in the women's secret association called *Langambas* in Lagalag (Deacon, 4, p. 495).

[3] The consonants *q*, *kw* and *pw* all represent the same sound, which is a mixture of *kwhw* or *hwpw*, varying from dialect to dialect, for which the sign *q* has been adopted as a convention by the Melanesian Mission. Sounds having the same origin become in Malekula and the Small Islands *mb*, *b*, *p*, *v* or *w*.

[4] Codrington, 3, p. 169.

[5] In North Raga and Oba this Being is replaced by a special aspect of Ta-garo, namely Tagaro-lawua (Codrington, 3, p. 170), who is found also in Vao under the name of Ta-ghar Lawo with Le-hev-hev in the Cave of the Dead (see p. 227).

[6] The same name is found even further afield in Nguna under the form *Sugbwe* (Capell, 1, p. 71, quoting Milne).